



How To Make A Real Gingerbread House

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Courtesy of www.sexualabusehelp.com
The Website for Support, Information, and Networking

Ingredients for the dough

1 kg plain white flour (not high grade)
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp ground cloves
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
½ tsp allspice
½ tsp cardamom
½ tsp nutmeg
500 g golden syrup
500 g soft brown sugar
150 g butter
2 eggs

Ingredients for the icing

500 g icing sugar
2 egg whites
½ tsp cream of tartar

Ingredients for the decor

Small lollies such as M & M's (regular and mini), jellybeans (halved so they don't slide off), 100s & 1000s etc.

Check out your supermarket's bulk bin, especially if you would like to theme your house e.g. fruity, flowery, traditional red and green etc. Less is more, don't be tempted to drown the house!

Sugar cookie recipe to use up spare egg yolks:

2 egg yolks

150g castor sugar

200 g butter (softened, not melted)

splash of vanilla essence

options for flavour

- 1 tbsp cocoa powder or
- 1 tsp ground ginger

Mix to a smooth dough, chill in fridge until very firm, roll out to 3.5mm thickness, cut cookies, bake at 150 degrees Celsius for 10-12 minutes or until edges are turning golden.

Take care, these burn quickly!

Decorate with icing sugar and water wash for a thin luminescent glaze (add cinnamon or ginger to wash for variety), use royal icing to pipe on designs or use compound (cooking) chocolate to glaze or stick lollies on.

These are great Christmas cookies for the kids to make or to give away as gifts. Raw dough can be frozen and kept for up to two months.

Preparation of the gingerbread dough

	Measure flour, baking powder and spices into a large bowl and mix with a whisk.
	In a pot on medium to low heat melt the butter, sugar and syrup while stirring regularly. Once it has all melted take it off the heat straight away, do not allow to boil furiously. This caramelises and burns the sugar and makes the dough rock hard and impossible to work.
	Whisk the eggs briefly with a fork then pour over the dry ingredients. Pour the melted mixture on top and mix everything reasonably thoroughly with a wooden spoon. Don't touch, this will be quite hot!
	Once it has cooled enough to touch dust your working surface liberally with flour and knead the dough into a smooth and shiny ball. Wrap in cling film to keep from drying out and set aside.

Tip: You can keep the dough like this for up to a week but keep it room temperature. Do not put it in the fridge once the sugar cools down to fridge temperatures the dough will become solid and impossible to roll out. You can cut the shapes you want and layer them between baking paper and freeze ready to pull out and pop straight in the oven. Do not freeze the whole lump of dough though. If it does harden because it was out on the bench for a few days zap it in microwave in 10 second bursts until pliable. Take care not to cook it though. The dough is best fresh.

Preparation of the house parts:

	<p>Roll the dough out to a good 5mm thickness and cut out all the required house parts. If your dough is very soft and stretchy and the shapes warp when transferred to the baking sheet you can roll out onto baking paper and cut there, removing all excess dough. This uses more trays but makes sure the pieces keep their exact shape. Another way to correct shapes is to place the cutter around the piece on the tray after transfer and to smooth the shape inside so that it is once more a perfect fit.</p>
	<p>Place all the house pieces on two trays and all the smaller pieces on a third. The small pieces do not take as long and will burn if you bake them with the bigger ones.</p>
	<p>The house requires the following pieces (if you do not have cookie cutters a card shape traced with a sharp knife works perfectly fine):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 x gable (cut in door and save it so that it can stand open, add windows if you like)• 2 x side (cut in windows)• 2 x roof (cut in to seat chimney)• 4 x rectangles for chimney• 4 x fence (opt)• 8 x pine tree (opt)• 2 x snowman (opt)• 2 x gingerbread man/woman (opt)• 2 x cat (opt)• 6 x stepping stones (opt)• Misc logs for woodpile (opt)



If there is dough left over cut it as cookies and bake with the rest. This recipe makes delicious gingerbread cookies! Bake everything at 150 degrees Celsius for 20-30 minutes depending on size of pieces. The house pieces should be well cooked and a nice brown. The smaller pieces can be softer and more golden. The house needs to be solid once it has cooled as it always softens in Auckland's humidity.

Tip: Once it has sat for a few weeks and tormented everyone with its delicious smell and lollies in the run-up to Christmas it is delicious to eat. Gingerbread is best after at least 2 weeks to allow the spices to draw. The house will keep for a good 8 weeks so it can be made early November and keep until Christmas.

Assembling the house:



While everything is cooling whip up the royal icing. In a good sized bowl whisk the two egg whites then add the cream of tartar and the icing sugar. Whisk until smooth, thick and brilliant white. This icing sets rock hard and will glue the house beautifully. Make sure that when you pull out the mixer it forms nice peaks that don't 'melt away'.



Either put the icing straight away into the piping bag piping syringe or plastic piping bottle that you intend to use or cover it with cling film. If you leave the icing exposed to air for 5 minutes or more a crust starts to form which blocks the pipes and makes icing a curse.



If you wish to have stained glass windows you can use crushed lollies (but they melt in the humidity) or you can use cellophane paper. Cut it to size, run a line of icing around the window on the inside of the house panel and then stick it on. Stick the fences, trees, people, snowman and chimney together and leave to dry.



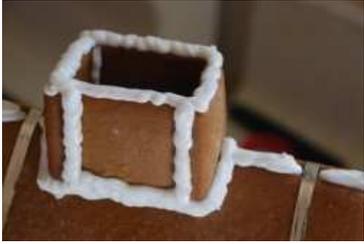
Assembling the house is reasonably simple as long as the icing is nice and thick. Run a line of icing down the bottom of each side of the first gable then attach first one then the other wall. Slide the second gable also iced up against the two upright walls. All four pieces should stand up no problem. Make sure it is nicely centred on your plate then run a line of icing all along the bottom to secure the house and keep it from sliding in transport.



Lay the two roof panels flat and adjust the hole for the chimney to fit. Careful, the crunchy gingerbread breaks easily – very gently cut away. Don't panic if it is not perfect, a thick line of icing around the chimney at the end hides all sins. Attach the two roof panels together by running two lines of ribbon from end to end attaching them with a pin into the edge of the roof on each side. The roof is now hinged. Run a thick line of icing along the top of the two gables then gently lie the hinged roof over the top. Because of the ribbon it will hold itself up and



not slide down. Run a line of icing along the top of the roof centre line skipping the ribbon. Fill this in once you have removed the ribbon. Leave to dry.

	<p>Run a thick line of icing along the outside of the chimney opening then place the chimney snugly within. Ice the outlines. Place a wad of cotton wool on top for the smoke but remember to remove this if you place and light a candle inside the house. The chimney has to be a physical opening if you want to have a candle.</p>
	<p>Decorate the house as you please. A few tips: do the sides before doing the icicles and don't overpower the house with lollies. Less is more. To do the icicles squeeze a blob of icing on and then pull down as you gently squeeze some more. If you want a candle remember to leave the door wide enough ajar to fit a tea light. Place fences trees snowman people cats log pile stepping stones etc as you please. Trim the bottom of wobbly bits to ensure they stand firmly in their bed of icing and don't tip over. Last but not least dust with icing sugar to give it that snowy look. Enjoy 😊</p>

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